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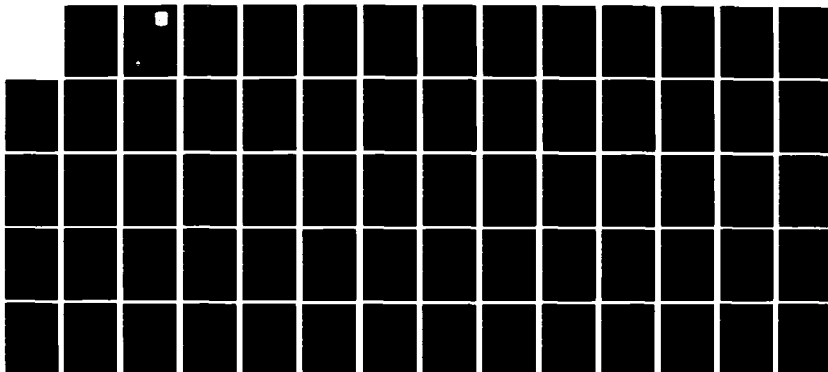
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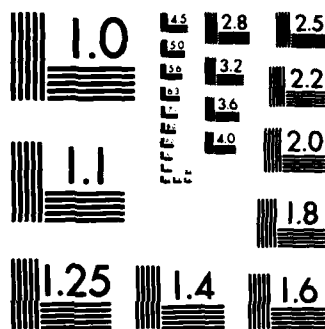
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STUDY PROJECT

STRATEGY, POLICY, AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING . . . THE US DEFENSE PLANNING PROCESS

BY

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM

STRATEGY, POLICY, AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING . . .
THE US DEFENSE PLANNING PROCESS

GROUP STUDY PROJECT

by

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ABSTRACT

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PREFACE

This Group Study Project was produced under the aegis of the US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute. The scope and general methodology were developed by the study participants and approved by the study director. The three authors were specifically selected by the War College to participate on this Commandant's Topic Program study based on their civilian and military experience in the defense conducted to identify problems, if they existed, in the current US defense planning process. Many of the interviews were granted to members of the study group with the understanding that the rules of nonattribution would apply. The study team fully respected this ground rule throughout their research. Special thanks is given to Colonel Harry Summers, Jr., for his outstanding and enlightening guidance throughout the study period.

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CHAPTER I

The rigorous standard by which we judge ourselves is what makes us different from the totalitarian regimes of the left and right.

Henry Kissinger

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this study is to analyze US defense planning with the objective of ascertaining whether or not the planning process has systemic difficulty in developing viable military contingency plans . . . plans which when implemented produce winning results.¹ In an attempt to study this issue, authoritative national-level policy guidance, its scope and detail, and the ultimate Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) military planning process were reviewed. Personal interviews, in a nonattribution environment, with key civilian and military leaders in the defense planning process, as well as an analysis of written material and classified documents pertaining to the planning process constituted the methodology used by the study group.

The immensely complicated nature of the US defense planning process, coupled with the sensitive and restricted nature of most of the planning documents, required that the study be tailored and for distribution purposes, purposely kept at the unclassified level. Specifically, the study group scoped the effort to determine if, in point of fact, the US defense planning process has deficiencies, systemic or with regard to leadership, that would account for operational difficulties experienced by US forces over the last decade.

Examples of typical attacks recently published on the US defense establishment which targeted on past operational difficulties are in part similar to the following news media excerpts.

"CAN'T ANYBODY HERE RUN A WAR?"

America's ability to conduct successful military missions is impaired by a system that puts everyone--and no one--in charge. Pressure is building for reform

US News and World Report
27 February 1984

The article goes on to say,

critics of the armed-services brass, joined on some issues by staunch military supporters, maintain that a broad range of weaknesses could prove disastrous in the future:

- * A military hierarchy hampered by a bureaucracy better prepared to manage weapons systems than to fight any foe.
- * Interservice rivalries so paralyzing to the JCS that long-range strategic planning suffers.
- * A confusing command structure that sometimes leaves everyone and no one responsible for the success or failure of a military operation.
- * A history of grudging cooperation among the services that undermines combat effectiveness.
- * Spotty intelligence support that is blamed for repeated military planning failures.

Additionally, other headlines proclaim:

"OFFICERS SEE US MILITARY HAMSTRUNG BY
ITS OWN BUREAUCRACY."

Michael Getler, Reporter
15 February 1984
Washington Post News Service

"US MILITARY RECORD SINCE INCHON HAS BEEN ONE
OF PERSISTENT PROFESSIONAL MALPRACTICE."

US News and World Report
29 January 1984
Jeffrey Record, Senior Fellow
Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis
Washington, DC

The critics of US defense planning have questioned not only the planning process but also the professional capabilities of the military leadership responsible for the planning. As Jeffrey Record of the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis charged in a recent article in the Washington Post, "Only profound intellectual and institutional deficiencies within the US military itself can explain so many failures on so many battlefields for so many years."² Additionally, Representative James Courter, R-N.J., released a study of the Grenada invasion which concluded, ". . . it was not the classic military success the Pentagon suggests but a shoddily planned operation that raised disturbing questions about US military tactics and performance."³

These sample critiques, while somewhat shallow and faulted with media emotionalism, nevertheless signal a serious negative perception that, thanks to the news media's approach of less than comprehensive reporting of a subject, is gaining acceptance. The repercussions of such a perception if taken serious by US allies throughout the world could be most damaging to US security.

These articles have been roundly condemned as "wrong" by Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger and generally by many defense experts who are by profession and position more knowledgeable in matters of overall US military competency. General Wickham, the Army Chief of Staff, was noted to say after reading one of the above referenced articles, that there was a definite need for some counterpoints to these articles. He felt that the services had some good points to make--although there are elements of truth in some of the criticisms.

A rare exception to the rash of critical military articles was an article which appeared in the Washington Post on 28 January 1984, entitled, "The Military Is Not Hobbled," written by Mr. Tidal W. McCoy, the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower, Reserve Affairs and Installations. Mr. McCoy takes issue with the authors attacking the defense system. He states in part . . . "The authors clearly do not understand the nature of strategy and tactics, and the organization necessary to carry them out in the pursuit of US security interests." His article goes on to disagree with those who suggest that the Defense Department is an inefficient organization and because of that inefficiency the US has experienced difficulties. Mr. McCoy suggests that

. . . the real problem and the real distinction between Grenada and the Iran mission in 1980 were not to be found in organization issues but in the leadership that was provided in each case. The unsuccessful rescue mission in Iran was caused by indecision and interference from the White House down through the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The successful action in Grenada, with only two days to plan it, was an example of how the DOD can flexibly be organized to focus its efforts rapidly to achieve a specific and well-thought-out objective.

Unfortunately, the good points that General Wickham and Mr. McCoy were referring to never seem to attain the wide media coverage given to those who criticize the US defense establishment.

DEFENSE RESPONSIBILITIES

Worldwide defense responsibilities hold the potential at any time, and in almost any location, for the exercise of some type of US military power. Based on its declared military strategy of flexible response, the US has chosen a strategic modus operandi that requires it to plan for, and be prepared to respond with, a wide potential spectrum of force applications, literally any place in the world. The question seems to be, does the defense planning process meet the modern day US national security defense challenge? Is there some aspect of the planning process which is hampering the US's ability to support its strategy of flexible response in a manner which insures acceptable results? Are the criticisms of the US military and their planning abilities well-founded? Assuming there is a problem, is it the military, per se, which has planning problems or is the issue more encompassing? If there are problems would a reorganization of the process or some part of it such as the roles and missions of the JCS, correct them? This range of questions formed a basis from which to conduct working level interviews and analysis of the US defense planning process.

CHAPTER II

Woe to the cabinet which, with a policy and plans of half-measures and a fettered military system, comes upon an adversary who . . . knows no other law than that of his intrinsic strength . . . if a bloody slaughter is a horrible sight, then that is a ground for paying more respect to war, but not for making the sword we wear blunter . . . until someone steps in with one that is sharp and lops off the arms from our body.

Carl Von Clausewitz, 1830

UNITED STATES DEFENSE PLANNING

History has clearly documented the fact that no nation has had a perfect defense planning process that worked in all cases and under all circumstances. While the US defense planning process appears to satisfy all of the required planning essentials for success, it also has not worked in all cases. Some defense experts believe that the process does work well for the strategic purpose for which it was designed.⁴ Others disagree and feel that the process has a strategically dangerous bias towards parochial, military service, oriented budget matters.⁵

A review of US defense planning process flow charts and the assigned responsibilities associated with all the various elements participating, does depict an extremely complex maze of interlocking, time-phased, inputs and outputs.⁶ While most of these elements do have fiscal implications, so, it seems, does the fundamental essence of military planning. Buried within the planning process are elements of governmental agency and military service parochialisms . . . whether any or all of these aspects are operationally dangerous or whether they tend

to enhance the overall process is impossible to determine with any degree of certainty. A "prudent man" approach to the question would probably suggest that in an era of scarce resources a nation should develop a planning process which limits service parochialisms unless their concepts fit into the overall grand strategy of that nation's defense. Since the US does not have a "Purple Suited" approach to its military services it is safe to say that parochialism is very much a part of the US defense planning process . . . in fact it is systemic to the process.⁷

While it is not the intention of this study to explain the Joint Operations Planning Systems (JOPS) or the Planning, Programming, Budgeting System (PPBS) it is important to review the major fundamental components of the process in an attempt to determine what each major component contributes to the strategy, policy and defense planning process.⁸ Depending on how one views the entire planning process, and from what vista such a view is taken, it appears quite possible that several interpretations of how well the planning process is working could be developed. Because of that fact the study began its analysis at the top of the planning process . . . with the Executive Branch.

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Strategists in the Executive Branch are charged with planning the application of national power under all circumstances to assure US security in peacetime, as well as in war, despite impediments. Comprehensive national security strategy and policy, promulgated by the President, is supposed to form the foundation for all defense planning, ostensibly in conformation with proven procedures. The President chairs the National Security Council (NSC), which by its charter is

supposed to advise him regarding the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies. Other statutory members include the Vice-President, Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense.

Additional departments, agencies, and offices take part as required, to ensure consideration of various viewpoints and options. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has been a regular attendee at NSC meetings since President Truman's time; so has the Director of Central Intelligence. Final national policy approval will ultimately come from the American people. National policies that fail to reflect their will rarely last very long. Neither do officials who formulate them, as several found out during the Vietnam war period. US leaders therefore try to promulgate strategic plans, policy and programs that clearly are in tune with "public opinion," or as is often the case, they take steps to shape and acquire concurrence. Political problems such as those experienced by President Carter after the failure of the Iranian hostage rescue operation; and those experienced by President Reagan after the terrorist bombing of the US marines in Beirut, quickly turn public and international opinion against a President. The implications of planning outcomes which fail for whatever reason to meet the test are extremely costly to the US.

An analysis of the US defense planning process just described confirmed that such a system is in place and that it is basically understood by the key leaders and staffs involved. However, it was also determined that many of the key decision-makers felt they were severely constrained in their ability to fully accomplish their envisioned defense planning charter.

The primary difficulty stated by those senior officials interviewed invariably returned to the ever-growing difficulty in working with Congress, the budget, and the pressure of dealing with a media seemingly bent on fault finding. These general impediments, it was felt, had a significantly adverse impact on the President's overall strategy and policy development flexibility, and the ability of the process as a whole, to properly formulate and implement contingency plans.

During several interviews, key Administration and Defense Department officials stated that they were faced with attempting to promulgate national strategy and policy, requiring critical military planning and resourcing, under what they felt was a Congressional budget siege environment ". . . everyone wants to be a critic of US national strategy and policy, it is good politics." This type of environment is felt to produce extremely divisive affects within the defense planning arena and, in general, with the overall acceptance of US defense initiatives worldwide.

PLANNING AND THE NATIONAL COMMAND AUTHORITY

Comprehensive national strategy development is by charter the province of the President and his close advisers, who are supposed to provide the focus for all supporting efforts. They must furnish sound guidance in a timely fashion and fuse responsive efforts for the defense planning system to function effectively. It is highly questionable, however, whether the open and democratic nature of our political system and the resulting dynamics of the Washington, DC fishbowl environment facilitates the degree of strategy planning which should be the province of US President. This perception was voiced by several key administration personnel. They felt that general direction, rather than specific

focus or specific guidance on how to accomplish Presidential strategy and policies, was a more realistic projection of a US President's actual province. American political history suggests that they may be in fact correct.

As far as national level strategy and policy planning is concerned there is no question that the President is the pivot or should be. He either makes the most important strategy and policy decisions or retains responsibility when he delegates authority for his subordinates to make them. President Reagan is a strong believer in delegation and firmly stands behind his subordinates while always ready to take full responsibility if problems result. While this is a most admirable trait in any leader it nevertheless requires subordinates who are highly informed, experienced and who work in close coordination with one another. Political history once again suggests that this situation is seldom the case.⁹

The XXII Amendment to the US Constitution, ratified 1 March 1951, permits each President no more than two four-year terms, plus two years to which a predecessor was elected. Only two Presidents since 1960, however, have lasted even half that long.¹⁰ Chief Executives are therefore compelled to depend to a very large extent on advice from civilian officials, whom they appoint, and the senior military service chiefs in the Pentagon, who may have been picked by predecessors. A survey of top US politico-military leaders since World War II indicated that few Presidential advisors, for instance, were initially well prepared by education or experience to participate in the defense planning process . . . they learned on the job with varying degrees of ultimate success.¹¹ This problem is currently haunting President Reagan and his

staff who are constantly critiqued as not having the background or experience required for national policy development.

From the analysis conducted, the most critical aspect of the defense planning process from the National Command Authority vista remains the ability of the President and his staff to construct comprehensive national security strategy, policy and guidance. Equally clear is the perception that this aspect of the process appears to be difficult if not impossible to fully accomplish within the realities of the political environment. The fact remains, however, that without consistent National Command Authority policies, guidance and focus for all supporting efforts, the final outcome of systemically parochial military defense planning will in all probability fall short of its intended purpose. Unfortunately, the final outcomes must wait to be measured until the day the plans are put to the test . . . perhaps ultimately with US forces in combat. If planning has been poor or if the military leadership can not pick up the slack which seems endemic to the process, the national security of the US could in the final tally be threatened . . . the stakes are supremely high.

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

The President chairs the National Security Council (NSC), whose members are to assess the appraise (US) objectives, commitments, and risks . . . in relation to our actual and potential military power. The NSC is, by charter, the principal forum for consideration of all national security policy issues requiring Presidential decision.

Since its establishment by the National Security Act of 1947 the NSC system has provided the single most important framework for establishing policy objectives, developing policy options, considering

implications, coordinating operational crisis problems that require interdepartmental consideration, developing recommendations for the President, and monitoring implementation of policy.

The NSC system also provides the main channel through which the JCS discharge a substantial part of their statutory responsibilities as the principal military advisers to the President, the NSC itself, and the Secretary of Defense.

Based on analysis of the NSC system it can be said to be only partially fulfilling its function. As far as providing a forum for the Chairman and the JCS to provide input to the President, the NSC system is judged to be working well. It is somewhat questionable, however, based on interviews with NSC staff personnel and Pentagon OSD policy-makers, whether or not the NSC system, per se, is providing the intended Presidential advisory forum for US defense planning it is in large part chartered to do.

To a great extent the NSC system is as important in the strategy, policy development and planning business as the President desires it to be. Under the Reagan Administration and several previous administrations it does not appear to be, or to have been, as influential in the defense planning process as was envisioned; and once again this places the formulation of US national security strategy, policy and planning in a less than optimum environment.¹²

Within the NSC system there are other important groups which are also by charter designed to assist the President. The National Security Planning Group chaired once again by the President deals with specific issues felt not to lend themselves to consideration by the NSC. On this council sits the Vice-President, Secretary of State and Defense,

Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Counselor to the President, Chief of Staff to the President, Deputy Chief of Staff to the President, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and when invited, the Chairman of the JCS. This group is reportedly favored by President Reagan over the limited attendance of the NSC, primarily due to the presence of his close White House advisers.

Another source of advice to the President for defense planning comes from the Special Situation Group which deals primarily with crisis management, and Senior Interagency Groups which deal with interagency issues requiring coordination among government departments to establish policy objectives, develop policy options, and implement Presidential decisions. Interagency Groups are a subdivision of the Senior Interagency Group and are formed to frame interagency policy options on national security issues, including those issues arising from the implementation of NSC or NSPG decisions.

All of these groups are vital components of the US defense planning process and all provide to the President, or should provide advice and well thought-out defense planning options. The general perception of the actual functions accomplished by these groups, gained from interviews suggests that they seldom have the luxury to address issues to the extent that their charter envisioned. Time collapsed requirements and crisis action responses tend to dominate their attention . . . detailed policy development and planning does not and by default is therefore left once again primarily to the aegis of the Department of Defense.

As one researcher noted, "the Council apparatus and procedures for applying it, have been, and continue to be on an institutional roller coaster since the NSC's inception in 1947."¹³ Rapid rises to peaks and plunges to troughs occur repeatedly, while successive presidents reshape

Council purpose and structure to suit their temperament. As an example, every President since Eisenhower has installed an Assistant for National Security Affairs on the NSC staff (they were called Special Assistants until 1969). Their associated functions have never been subject to statutory restrictions, since their post is not prescribed by law. Their primary responsibilities have run a gamut from staff supervision at one pole to policy planning at the other.

This roller coaster approach to the all important duties of the NSC can not help but weaken to some degree the entire defense planning process. As mentioned earlier, while President Reagan is prone to delegate responsibility, he does not appear to fully use the NSC system as a major player in the defense planning process. He does rely on his Assistant for National Security Affairs (although having changed this assistant twice in three years) and his close White House Aides, and of course, his Secretary of Defense.

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

As a direct result of the aforementioned situations, US national defense planning in almost its entirety takes place within the Pentagon. The OSD, JCS, and all four military services provide the main planning inputs as do the military Unified and Specified commands, and assorted military agencies.

The Secretary of Defense and his OSD staff attempt to steer that military planning process from start to finish. The Secretary of Defense furnishes guidance, sifts proposals, and makes final macro planning decisions. His Deputy, Under Secretaries, Directors, and associated staffs participate in this process to a substantial degree but

seldom are they involved in the contingency planning process to any degree. Previous assistants have tried but were stonewalled by the JCS, who prefer to keep military operational planning strictly in the hands of the military planner. So far they appear to be totally successful. Periodically the Secretary of Defense is given overviews of selected plans by the Chairman of the JCS . . . his staff is not given such briefings.

In the Reagan Administration the Secretary of Defense is judged as perhaps the single most powerful force in the entire defense policy and planning process. Since President Reagan has taken office the Defense Department has experienced its largest budget advances in over a decade, and certainly a considerable change in its perceived measure of importance as compared to the previous President's view of defense matters. Secretary Casper W. Weinberger shares the President's absolute confidence, and as a result, department policy and defense planning interpretations are generally accepted with equal resolve. All of the military services have shared in this rebirth of military support and have moved quickly to modernize their specific forces as they view the implicit requirements of their service. The budget implications of such a favorable political turn of events process are well understood by all the service chiefs, who also understand the potential temporal state of such a supportive environment.

To a large degree, however, the Secretary of Defense still appears, as Henry A. Kissinger stated in his book, Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy, ". . . at best an arbitrator of persistent budget and doctrinal disputes." In point of fact, according to a highly placed OSD manager, the Secretary of Defense possesses neither the staff nor the organization to fully shape budget or service doctrinal disputes.¹⁴

Implicit in the present defense planning process and organization is the notion that seemingly strategic defense doctrine, policy, and planning reflects purely military considerations. Thus, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs reports directly to the President and attends meetings of the National Security Council. Although the special relationship between the President and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs is explicit in the fact that the President is also Commander-in-Chief, it has contributed to the practical autonomy of the military in matters of defense doctrine, policy, and planning. Certainly the current flood of military critics seem to believe such is the case.

Given the current situation in which the NSC system is not heavily used, coupled with the President's inability to spend the time required to fully specify in detail his national policy and planning guidance, and the pressures imposed by the political system on the Secretary of Defense, the overall defense planning process is fundamentally left to the OSD staff (who are in large measure kept at arms length by the JCS); the JCS; the Military Services; and to the Unified/Specified Commands unilaterally interpreting National Command Authority guidance and planning accordingly. Other agencies do appear to participate in this interpretive process, but, it seems, never as major playwrights only minor script editors. If there is a problem with the final outcome of the military planning process it therefore appears to be mainly the responsibility of those who have inherited the main planning role . . . JCS, the Services and the Unified/Specified commands.

Such a defense planning centralization and separation from the envisioned National Command Authority system could, and apparently has, operated to the detriment of the planning process. For one thing, it

has caused military matters to become identified in the eyes of Congress with the most absolute applications of power and it tempts diplomacy into an overconcern with political finesse. Since it appears that the difficult problems of national strategy, policy and planning are in an area where political, economic, psychological, and military factors overlap, there is real danger in the fiction that there is such a thing as purely military advice, or purely military defense planning devoid of the other considerations mentioned.

Unfortunately, with other facets of the defense planning process not truly functioning as designed that is exactly what has been happening over a period of years. It would require a much wider analysis than was conducted in this study to measure the future consequences of such a situation. In the context of US defense planning and the highly speculative nature of planning outcomes it seems highly warranted that a detailed look at this situation should be undertaken as soon as possible.

THE BUDGET BATTLE

With more than the envisioned defense planning process defaulted to the DOD, and particularly on the JCS and the Services, the latter must be given some relief from the almost incessant effort of either preparing, negotiating, or justifying budgets. Almost inevitably it diverts military energies and time from the vital problems of overall defense strategy, policy and planning development. This is a serious flaw in the planning process.

Within OSD and the Services, the budget cycle is all encompassing, demanding in one fashion or another almost full-time attention by a majority of the senior decision-makers. Given the equal extent of defense planning and development responsibilities which demand vast

amounts of senior DOD official participation, (inherited in part by the default of other defense planning agencies to fulfill their charter), it appears dangerously problematical as to the successful operational outcomes of the least supervised aspect of the process--contingency plans.

By the very nature of the beast, the management aspect of planning, programming and budgeting is clearly all consuming. Given the realities of the political environment and the Congressional budget cycle perhaps this situation can not be helped, but it certainly appears that it is dominating senior officials' time at the expense of contingency operational planning. In all probability, JCS planners, per se, may disagree with that assessment. Consideration of the implications for the US if they are misplaced in their judgement, however, suggests that the risk based on somewhat institutional bias or professional pride may be unacceptable.

It also appears that it would be a mistake to expect too much from any single organizational remedy, such as the often recommended reorganization of the JCS, in hopes of correcting this problem. Many of the difficulties and root causes of the military planning process's shortcomings appear to have been caused by national traits which are systematically ingrained in our political and military system. As in all tragedies, many of those suggested military planning problems we suggest have been produced in spite of American's good intentions and have been caused not by our countrymen's worst qualities but by their best. This aspect of the planning problem became quite clear during the many interviews conducted at the OSD level.

Foremost among the budget oriented attitudes which appear to greatly impact on the making of our defense strategy, and the resulting

policies and plans, are the budget driven requirements for certainty: nothing is true unless it is objective, and it is not objective unless it is part of our experience or can be proven in some manner. Defense budgets are therefore based on a comparative analysis of the Soviet military capabilities versus the USs. The sad aspect of this budget reality is the fact that one cannot be sure about the implications of intelligence or warnings until they prove themselves to be a threat to the US and/or its Allies . . . when the threat does occur it is often too late to do anything about it except react in a crisis action manner. Our defense planning process seems, therefore, to be faced with dealing with, and to be tested on, crisis action contingencies.

Unfortunately, crisis planning appears to be conducted in an ad hoc manner due to the lack of previously coordinated plans. The bottom line is simply that the bulk of the overall DOD planning process concentrates on mid-term and long-term force structure planning in order to meet the budget process time windows imposed by Congressional law.

In the Office of the Secretary of Defense and in the Military Services, planning becomes a matter of appropriations, authorizations and budget ceilings based on out year planning assumptions and National Command Authority guidance, which is general in scope at best.

STATE AND DEFENSE INTERFACE

US departments, agencies, and bureaus must do business with each other on a daily basis. National security strategy, policy and defense planning can proceed effectively only if they can orchestrate their efforts successfully.

Critical connections come together at State and Defense. Foreign policy points the way to security, but military capabilities often

confirm what courses of action are feasible. Attempts to proceed on separate tracks spell trouble. Collaboration, however, routinely begins to break down before it really gets started. Few Secretaries of State and Defense have been closely knit planning partners since the US stepped onto the World stage and into the center spotlight during World War II . . . and the present Secretaries of State and Defense are no exception to this past trend. Conflict between the past Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, and Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger during the 1981-1982 time frame concluded with Haig's resignation in June of 1982. Secretary of State Schultz is now rumored to also resign after the 1984 Presidential election. Currently the all important coordination between State and Defense is primarily carried on by inter-agency staff elements. The State Department does not appear to be the major player in the US defense planning process that it should be . . . another dangerous flaw in the process.

The congruence of military contingency plans with foreign policy objectives must be taken on faith by the State Department inasmuch as State is not privy to the military plans. Our interviews at State revealed that civilian and military personnel alike express understanding for the dictates of military operational security, if not heartfelt affection. There were mixed feelings, however, regarding the impact of security concerns in the planning and policy coordination phase.

The dichotomy between foreign policy formulation and development of military contingency plans is ascribed by some to the nature of democratic society, which emphasizes diversity and freedom of action together with the free exchange of information and popular expectations of accountability in government. Such conflicting pressures create the

need for separate procedures for foreign policy development and the creation of plans for military action to back up foreign policy. Citizens of a democracy live experientially, not as programmed creatures of the centrally planned state--the predictability quotient is understandably low.

A matrix can be constructed to depict the dichotomy as it occurs in the late twentieth century US using as variables the level of threat perceived by the White House in a given contingency, its political sensitivity, the level of coordination and involvement of various national security players, and the amount of time necessary to produce a military plan responding to the circumstances.

The first case described by our interlocutors at State involved a contingency of high political significance to the Administration, one whose occurrence is subject to significant technical impediments, but capable of rapid development once underway. We were told that instructions emanating directly from the NSC were answered by the production of military contingency plans in the Pentagon within a few weeks. State was not involved.

A second contingency had captured the interest of working level foreign affairs specialists and defense planners over a two-year period. Less encumbered with technical difficulties, and with estimates of likely occurrence approximately equal to the first case, no real movement toward development of coordinated military contingency plans took place until sufficient political interest could be generated within the NSC. Plans were then advanced and coordinated in Washington and are currently being reviewed with the nations affected.

A third example for our matrix involves an eventuality for which a wide variety of foreign affairs personnel and military planners in State

and the Pentagon believe a military plan should exist. While the degree of probability of the particular contingency occurring is low, it is on a par with the likelihood of numerous other threatening developments taking place, developments for which the US already has military contingency plans. Absent political interest in addressing the contingency, disultory discussion between working level staffers continues intermittently without progress on a coordinated plan. There is reason to believe, particularly because of the damaging prospects for US national interests should the unlikely scenario unfold, that the Pentagon actually has a plan for the orphan contingency. Whether or not it will be applicable to policy objectives of the time if and when it must be implemented is debatable, given the dearth of coordination and agreement on those very policy objectives. Still, recognition by military planners of their responsibility for US defense readiness to counter any threat any time makes it tantamount to dereliction of duty for our defense establishment not to have a plan to counter even a remotely possible contingency. It is also debatable, however, that there will be sufficient time to modify a defense plan "off the shelf" if and when political interest heats up. An atmosphere of political tension is not conducive to careful and deliberate planning.

The time to debate contending viewpoints and test competing courses of action is before the contingency becomes reality. Anyone familiar with the Washington goldfish bowl is more than sympathetic with military commanders' concerns for the safety of men and units they will lead in operations. There is a level of detail between broad policy guidelines and operational maneuver which would benefit from the exchange of views between national defense professionals, uniformed and civilian. Absence

of dialogue on the relevance of military contingency plans to the foreign policy objectives they are designed to advance denies important input to the plans from both directions. Significantly, absence of military contributions regarding the feasibility and "do-ability" of actions contemplated in support of foreign policy objectives is a major defect.

The press has made much about the apparent intelligence failure during the Grenada operation in which military commanders were surprised to discover the existence of two campuses to which American medical students were confined. A logical point may be made that if the intention of this country was to rescue students held virtual hostage by a regime out of control, planners would have taken the trouble to inquire regarding the students' locations. If, on the other hand, rescue of endangered American students was merely a pretext for preemptive action against a potentially hostile, if admittedly miniscule, island nation, the existence of another campus is of secondary importance. News reports indicated that some US intelligence agencies claim that military commanders were informed of the second campus. Press interviews with military commanders conducting ground operations dispute this point. Perhaps both sides are correct: someone was given accurate intelligence about student dispositions. Was that person able to translate the information into military action? The point is not small. When the President of the United States indicates that he is ordering military action for certain purposes, it behooves his military commanders to know what the purposes are and act accordingly. Ready-made plans for all seasons may not provide sufficient contemporary detail permitting the military to be the surgical instrument its commanders and their Commander-in-Chief desire.

In this one hundredth anniversary year of the birth of Harry Truman it is useful to review the relationship between the formulation of national policy and the execution of military action in support of such policy. The memorandum for the Record prepared by General of the Army Omar Bradley on the decision to dismiss General MacArthur contains guidance on the relationship between military forces and the civilian leadership which is as significant to us today as it was when dictated some thirty years ago. Bradley observed that it was difficult to involve the field commander in Korea in contingency planning for reactive air strikes across the Yalu given MacArthur's strident opposition to the president's general policy of not carrying the war to Chinese territory. Then, as now, the members of the Joint Chiefs indicated their belief that the military must always be controlled by civil authorities. The situation in which military commanders find themselves in the 1980s is a good deal more complex than in the time of Truman and MacArthur. While the latter understood the course directed by the National Command Authority, he chose to follow a different path. His disagreement proved MacArthur's undoing. In the immensely more complicated policy environment in which we work today, it is difficult for the commander to become intimately familiar with details of the president's broad policy objectives--we have already described the layering which takes place in the planning process which isolates commanders from specific guidance. In the absence of coordination and consultation between the civilian policymakers who staff the NCA and military planners, the commander of today is as liable to run afoul of NCA intentions unwittingly as Douglas MacArthur did intentionally.

CUMULATIVE PLANNING CONSEQUENCES

US planners in the NSC and the Departments of State and Defense muddled through many times in the past when cooperative efforts were absent or at a low ebb because of irreconcilable opinions, personality conflicts, poor procedures, and/or insufficient cross-trained personnel. This assessment was provided by a senior official in the planning process who has labored in the arena for several years. He stated that associated costs, calculated in terms of increased risks, squandered resources (including lives), reduced opportunities, and lost international leverage and prestige have always been the high price paid for the lack of interagency coordination. Collaboration that prompts better mergers between foreign policy and military planning thus seems to be a very vital part of the defense planning process. Short of the President demanding that close collaboration be maintained with these Departments it appears beyond the scope of mere administrative alteration to repair the current problems. Proper crisis action contingency reactions will stand a high potential for some type of difficulty in such an environment.

CHAPTER III

If we desire to avoid insult, we must be able to repel it. If we desire to secure peace it must be known that we are at all times ready for war.

George Washington, 1732-1799

US DEFENSE PLANNING FROM THE NCA TO DOD . . . IN SUMMARY

The defense planning process, as stated earlier, is a very complex system of interrelating agencies, functions and players. Each player has an important role if the entire process is to perform its vital mission of national security. Many of the attacks leveled at the defense planning process isolate their concerns primarily with the military and its ability to either translate National Command Authority guidance or simply to develop and implement viable contingency plans which produce winning results. Up to this point in the study it has been determined that there are numerous aspects of the process beyond the direct responsibility of the military that are definitely not functioning as is commonly envisioned they should.

The military portion of the planning process, per se, appears to be attempting to make the process work, albeit to some degree, in spite of itself. In fact, the interviews conducted with senior DOD officials suggest that the military services are quite pleased with the planning license they have, especially in their new Presidential support to cure many of the modernization problems which have greatly hindered them all. With the exception of Congressional financial constraints, the military

services and Unified/Specified commands are fundamentally left alone to plan and prepare for operational contingencies as they see fit.

The US defense planning process in many respects seems to follow a motif which adheres to General Patton's thesis, ". . . never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity." This certainly appears to hold true for the National Command Authority's strategic planning guidance. Whatever surprises result, good or not so good, are therefore those primarily provided by the JCS, the military services and the major commands themselves. The "buck stops here" should be a borrowed motto that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff should have posted on his desk.

STRATEGY AND POLICY

The key policy document published by the Reagan Administration, National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) #32, is the strategy and policy document that lists the Administration's global and regional objectives, strategy and policy objectives. This central defense planning document was coordinated with all military services and briefed to the JCS. The State Department, NSC, OSD and the JCS all participated in its development and all agreed with its contents. Before it was released it was once again staffed extensively. All defense planning agencies were satisfied with the document. This conclusion was substantiated by all key defense officials interviewed in the course of this study. The basic importance of this fact is in the often heard cry from some quarters that the military should not be blamed for international outcomes that fail to meet the test because they were never given the kind of detailed guidance required . . . no commander's estimate of the situation, if you will. The point seems clear that the JCS and the

services are receiving the type and detail of command guidance that they want. Broad guidance, such as the mission given to the Marines in Beirut peacekeeping operation, appears to follow the level of detail desired by the JCS. If they interpret that brief guidance incorrectly and are caught short the responsibility seems to rest squarely on their shoulders.

A close inspection of NSDD #32 suggests that it sets the stage and direction for defense actions but does not list what those actions will be. Specific analysis of how to accomplish the strategy and policy objectives is left for interpretation by the defense planning process. In particular, the door is left opened for the military services and the JCS to figure out what steps should be taken. The services and the JCS wanted only general guidance and insured that they received exactly that kind. Given a close knit defense planning process which followed the system's charter, this interpretational challenge in all probability could be accomplished with great success. Considering that the process does not function in reality as it was intended, it becomes difficult to envision how the proper interpretations will be made, or when made, how accurately.

Clearly, vague guidance which starts in the Oval office and filters down the line is a serious planning process problem, but need not necessarily be a crippling one. Senior officials in the NSC, State Department, OSD and the JCS can fully develop US national security interests, objectives, and policy guidelines if they worked closely together . . . unfortunately they do not from this analysis appear to do so adequately. In many instances it appears that the military services are pleased with

such a situation as it offers greater latitudes in their constant battle for needed budget dollars.

STRATEGY AND POLICY TRANSLATION PROBLEMS

Second-level leaders for many years have had great difficulty, it appears, in translating known political aims into meaningful missions and plans for US military forces. This situation was highlighted by several defense officials who, in many cases, contrasted constantly changing US Policy directions every time a new President is elected with military force structure changes taking 8-10 years to implement. Changing equally fast are the budget levels available to the Defense Department to implement interpreted Presidential strategy.

Given the historically rapid changes in key officials charged with directing the defense planning process, it comes as no surprise that once in office their preoccupation is with present day budget problems, leaving little time to contemplate far-reaching strategy options, or those potential contingency problems that could come down the pike as the result of strategy or policy shortfalls. Long-range contingency planners consequently appear to occupy a low place in the pecking order, although far-reaching decisions must be taken today if US leaders hope to influence favorably what contingencies could be facing the US in the out-years. Few offices in DOD devote their primary efforts to detailed contingency planning, and those that do are headed by colonels or navy captains . . . one and two star flag officers are the upper limit of the actual workers.

Since budget realities dictate in fact how defense planners view their mission it becomes extremely problematical to them as to what forces will actually be available in the out-years to accomplish

directed military operations. "Prudent risk" forces that could in all probability accomplish assigned missions with reasonable assurance of success replaced "minimum risk" requirements when a greater degree of fiscal belt tightening was imposed by the Congress in the wake of Vietnam. President Reagan has brought some relief from that constraint, however, the cost for even "prudent risk" forces is still so great that the intended audience (especially the Congress) rarely even read these military requirements carefully . . . the cost of meeting the National Command Guidance, as interpreted primarily by the military, at the "prudent risk" level is simply too high.

The budget process fundamentally ignores military requirement plans, calling them a dream list or a benchmark only. In a letter, General Edward C. Meyer, past Chief of Staff of the Army, noted that, "Certainly there is room for differences in judgements regarding the threat and appropriate US responses. But those differences have grown so wide as to question whether we are pursuing any strategy at all." US defense plans are replete with incompatible military force combinations. Interests, objectives, policies, commitments, strategic concepts, and force postures often fail to complement each other and are at times at direct odds with each other. There simply are not enough forces to "prudently" cover all defense bases or all possible contingencies which might arise.

As Colonel Harry Summers, Jr., of the US Army War College Strategic Studies Institute observed in a recently published article in The Wall Street Journal,

In the name of efficiency and in substituting red tape for trust, we have gotten ourselves into an intolerable situation. If we are to ensure future military effectiveness, we must strengthen our capabilities for 'conduct of war proper' (and not confuse them with the equally essential capabilities

for 'preparation for war') and return to the battle-tested principle of 'vesting a single tactical commander with requisite authority.'

Any process as vital to US interests as the defense planning process that is not fully operating as was intended has a high potential for fatal consequences . . . there appear to be grounds for serious concern in this arena.

CRITICAL ACCLAIMS AND THE PLANNING PROCESS

The critics of the defense planning system have surfaced an important problem, only they have stopped short in their analysis. So far only a few contingency operations have not been militarily successful. But unless some of the systemic problems are corrected in the higher echelons of the planning process there could be a serious crisis looming just over the low-intensity conflict horizon. It is clear to the study members that the US defense planning process needs more specific national level direction and the process as a whole requires a much greater degree of leadership continuity. Given the vast extent of US defense responsibilities worldwide and the limited forces available to fulfill these requirements it seems reasonable to project that building a force on the margin and planning on an ad hoc basis will continue to provide operations that fail to meet acceptable standards. Add to that problem the central demand of the budget cycle, which requires the bulk of defense official's time at the expense of closely supervised and coordinated contingency plans, and you have a potentially serious US defense planning process problem.

In Chapter I an excerpt from US News and World Report stated that, "America's ability to conduct successful military missions is

impaired. . . ." Based on this portion of the analysis of the US defense planning process, which has concentrated from the NCA down to the DOD, it is determined that the essence of that excerpt may in fact have serious merit.

The US defense planning process in all reality rests with the JCS; the Services and the Unified/Specified Commands. The final planning outcomes therefore reside squarely in their ability to professionally interpret National policy guidance, structure a force which meets this guidance, plan for the use of military force to cover all possible requirements, and to orchestrate and implement plans as directed . . . a formidable task to say the least. Considering the US defense process problems mentioned above, if there are also problems within the JCS system, the Services, or in the Unified/Specified Commands, the national security of the US would be in for serious difficulty in meeting its modern-day security challenge. The US defense planning process up to this point is not equal to or greater than the sum of its parts. For the US to meet the challenges of the 1980s and 1990s this situation must be corrected.

CHAPTER IV

THE PLANNING PROCESS AND THE JCS

The vital necessity of complete unity in our strategic planning and basic operational direction should rest not with the separate services but directly with the Secretary of Defense and his operational advisor, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

President Eisenhower, 1958

This chapter will focus on the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) role in the planning process and the link between the JCS, the National Command Authority (NCA), and the Unified and Specified Commands.

That there are deficiencies in the defense establishment and particularly in the organization, functions and responsibilities of the JCS and the Unified/Specified commands is a fact that has long since been recognized. Officials, scholars and study groups have been expressing concern for many years. The issue received public awareness during 1982-1983 with the critique of the JCS presented by General Dave Jones, USAF, former Chairman, JCS, and General Edward C. Meyer, USA, Chief of Staff. There are a number of ongoing efforts initiated either by the JCS, the SECDEF or by Congressional groups attempting to deal with extremely complex and well entrenched issues.

Many of the issues are organizational in nature and it is not the intent of this chapter to reiterate them. The question of whether or not the JCS is adequately fulfilling its strategic purpose could well be left begging even if those modest proposals are adopted. The JCS is supposed to achieve: centralized strategic planning; unified command of

combat forces; and allocation of resources to forces, programs, and weapons.¹⁵ The extent to which the JCS is capable of achieving these major responsibilities determines if, indeed, the JCS is fulfilling its strategic purpose. What follows is an assessment of these responsibilities and, where appropriate, recommendations that could facilitate responsiveness.

Strategic Planning

The process outlined in Chapter I-III for the formulation of a policy, guidance to articulate that policy and the mechanism used to develop a strategy and the plans to implement that strategy left out (purposely, for elaboration at this point) the major difficulty in attempting to deal with the issue of strategic planning--the mismatch between strategy and policy. The JCS has consistently raised this issue in multiple forums, formal and informal, when dealing with the SECDEF and the President. Over the years the growing security threat caused policy-makers to extend commitments beyond the available resources prudently required to fulfill. The raising, equipping and organizing of military forces and then the planning for their operational use is expected to be done in the pursuit of political objectives. Simply stated, we must be able to do what we have pledged to do. The growth of commitments has made this extremely difficult. Strategic planning is compounded by the fact that the US has no clear guide for choice in its development of air, naval or land power because it must be prepared to wage war not only in varied and multiple locations but in a variety of intensities. Attempts to develop strategic plans that conform to policy objectives must also confront force level constraints (personnel and equipment) that have a profound impact on the end product.

Consequently, the JCS finds itself in this process faced with difficult, seemingly insurmountable problems. To be sure, effectively dealing with these problems is what the members of the JCS are paid for, but critics should avoid generalization and oversimplified solutions. Nonetheless, when one traces the evolution of the JCS in the formulation of strategy there seems to be little JCS initiative in strategy formulation. Over the last decades civilian agencies and groups have moved to shape strategy, leaving the development of the plans to deal with that strategy to the JCS.¹⁶ It would seem beneficial to the JCS to possess an inherent capability to generate dynamic, strategic thinking, referring to forward looking, innovative, proactive staff members educated and trained to deal with the ideas of the future and having available to them a mechanism with which to present these ideas to the NCA. Chapter II discussed the fluctuations that have characterized the Presidency over the last 30 years. With each fluctuation has come a group of smart, articulate executives and assistants that, certainly by virtue of their positions but also by default, have formulated the overall strategy that has dominated strategic planning. As a result, the JCS seemed to accept a reactive role in the formulation of strategy. In this process though, the JCS has come to dominate one extremely important aspect, and that is the formulation of the strategic plans that implement the strategy concept.

PLAN FORMULATION

As discussed in Chapter III, the guidance provided to the JCS seems to be adequate (for the purposes of the JCS) and is the result of an inter-agency process that has the JCS involved in the drafting of the guidance; when it is eventually received there are no major surprises.

For example: Defend Europe from Warsaw Pact attack; assist in the Defense of Japan; or Korea; be prepared to respond to a variety of regional contingencies. The JCS, through the Joint Strategic Planning System, takes such guidance and through a deliberate planning process develops plans to satisfy NCA objectives. There has been considerable criticism of this process. Although some criticisms are valid, many are based on generalizations. For example: Services assign low quality officers to the JCS and other Joint Assignments; therefore, whatever plan is produced is substandard; there is more interest in the budget process than in the planning process; therefore, plans have to suffer. The temptation to associate casual relationships is great but should not be the primary basis for identifying what plagues the planning process. The fact of the matter is that many critics are forced to raise issues without ever being able to see the contents of a strategic plan. The reason for that is that the JCS is very protective with the prerogative of plan development.

A policy proposed by the State Department, directed by the President, and translated into a strategy for action by the SECDEF can be manipulated by the JCS by plan development. Does the strategic plan produced by the JCS reflect the intended national security objective? Many critics within OSD, NSC and State argue that there is no way of knowing that, because, with the exception of selected, key NCA officials, the JCS does not inform anyone of the contents of the final document. This is a substantive issue and one that has yet to be resolved. Attempts have been made by key OSD officials to establish a process that will provide a "check" for guidance compliance. This has been resisted by the JCS for a number of substantial reasons beyond the

scope of this paper. Suffice to say that the arguments continue. It must be stressed that there are merits for greater interplay particularly when the formulation of the strategy is initiated in organizations other than the JCS. General Meyer stated that there must be "much greater interplay between the joint military and civilian leadership than exists at the present."¹⁷ The JCS is going to have to deal with that issue eventually. From a JCS perspective it may be best to take the initiative and present proposals for greater interplay in planning that protect JCS prerogatives. Failure to do so may well find an Administration dictating the terms for such interplay. Such an effort was attempted during the Carter Administration. Interviews with key civilian officials, although admitting that the JCS was successful in "stonewalling" the interplay problem, reveal that some DOD officials are still attempting to seek JCS compliance.

There are many other criticisms of the planning process although it is not intended to outline them all, several warrant elaboration.

Critics state that plans are unrealistic because many of the same forces are used in the development of plans for defending Europe, the Middle East or Korea. Additionally, the plans reflect service perspectives that stress their own interpretation of NCA guidance and are designed to enhance their position.

There are numerous plans that commit the same forces to a variety of scenarios. This is not a function of the planning process but of the aforementioned problem of policy-strategy-force mismatch. The constraints are great. In this area, the JCS seems to have done a commendable job in dealing with the problems created by broad policy commitments. Prepositioning of equipment on land and at sea; restructuring reserve component missions and capability; establishment of the Joint

Deployment Agency and others. The dilemma of multiple commitments of constrained resources has a considerable impact on the planning process. Unfortunately, drastically reducing commitments or drastically increasing the resources are not viable options given the parameters of the domestic and international scene. Simply stated: the JCS are told, "Do the best you can." Our interviews revealed that the current Administration has been extremely receptive to the issue of policy-strategy-force mismatch. To illustrate, key officials discussed the Carter Strategy of defending the Persian Gulf from Soviet aggression. (A good example of a policy-military strategy developed outside the JCS.) The JCS have developed a plan to implement that strategy. There are formidable risks, constraints, assumptions and early decisions that drive the successful execution of that plan. President Reagan has received not only a detailed briefing of the plan by the JCS but is aware of the constraints, particularly if there are multiple crises occurring.

This is part of a newly established JCS quarterly meeting with the President, a substantial step in the planning process. We recognize that the personalities of the President and the Chairman, JCS, lend themselves to such interface. Hopefully, future administration will continue the precedence.

The issue of service perceptions of NCA guidance and the effort to enhance their positions, particularly with regard to resource allocation, is one that has considerable merit. There are a number of proposed reforms intended to deal with the criticism: restructuring the JCS; broadening the power of the chairman, JCS; establishing a General Staff disassociated with any Service; and revising the Planning, Programming and Budgeting System (PPBS) are several of the most drastic that have been recommended. These may temper the problem to some extent but

the problem is not going to go away. Some critics argue that the only reason a service pushes to incorporate their desires into a strategic plan (NATO reinforcement for example) is for self-serving reasons of service enhancement. (Agreement allows more tanks to be bought or airplanes to be manufactured.) Yet, an equally strong case can be made that as a result of their experiences there is a genuine belief that the service proposal will best satisfy NCA guidance. Not all initiatives fall into either category but will be emphasized to one degree or another. The proposed reforms may facilitate deciding which service sponsored/supported proposal will be incorporated but the JCS will still have to deal with the problem.

An additional valid criticism of the planning process is of the command arrangements that are established to control the forces allocated to a plan. This criticism is mentioned here to maintain continuity with the listing of strategic planning criticisms. The issue will be addressed at a later point in this paper.

What has been outlined thus far refers to strategic plans developed deliberately to deal with a specific threat. Plan formulation is slow and cumbersome and reflects the machinations of a process extending through each of the services on one hand, and through the Unified/Specified Commands on the other hand. The planning process employed to deal with a sudden crisis will now be discussed.

Crisis Planning

A part of the NCA guidance to the JCS is a requirement to develop contingency plans for a variety of scenarios. Each CINC is charged by the JCS to develop plans that may involve civilian evacuation, protection of US citizens, or reinforcement of the security of an embassy or

US military installation. Generally, JCS must be prepared to respond to the unexpected. In examining the record of past crises, there was not a case in which a previously prepared contingency plan was accepted and implemented by the NCA. Certainly one reason for this is because the crisis was so unique that a contingency plan would not have been prepared. Yet, another reason could well be that the planning process was just not capable of anticipating an eventuality even in general terms. JCS should consider the process currently in affect to identify potential crisis situations along with the process used to prepare and modify contingency planning. This must be an ongoing process that ties intelligence-to plan formulation-to force available. The need for contingency planning is clear--it is simply impractical to wait until a crisis develops to begin planning. The ability to do this varies from CINC to CINC and region to region. The task remains as to how best to derive the benefits associated with preplanning (identification of units; command and control; assets required) and still be able to make the modification necessary to deal with the crisis at hand.

Crisis Action System

Currently, the JCS employs the Crisis Action System (CAS) to facilitate crisis management. The CAS, depicted as a logic flow, is a systematic procedure for reacting to an unexpected crisis. The six phases of the CAS provide a logical progression for crisis operations management. However, there is considerable incompatibility between the CAS and the process used by the NCA in seeking a solution to the crisis. Of particular concern to the NCA is a wide-ranging option search that may or may not involve military solutions. When the NCA eventually comes to the point of considering possible military responses, those involved are

a relatively small group of advisors who assist in addressing a problem that requires prompt, if not immediate action. The composition of this group of advisors has varied from president to president. The role of the military has also varied from president to president and oftentimes is very much personality driven. (Eisenhower-Lebanon; Kennedy-Cuban Missile Crisis; Johnson-Dominican Republic; Nixon-4th Mid-East War; Ford-Mayaguez; Carter-Hostage Crisis; Reagan-Grenada.) Historically, the NCA, when formulating and considering military commitment options, has been searching for options that are feasible, timely and fit the pattern of international and domestic political moves. It is evident that domestic and international political factors, as perceived by the NCA, drive the military option selection process and certainly not the CAS. What becomes evident in the study of crisis management is that option formulation within the CAS needs to be sensitive to domestic and international political trends to the extent that proposals reflect consideration to acceptable realities. The JCS must be prepared to provide timely and realistic options or the NCA will just search elsewhere for the acceptable military solution. Where the solution comes from has never been a factor in crisis management. In future crisis the JCS must consider that US resolve and credibility is being questioned, particularly in the Middle East. Options based on the importance of perceptions and signaling will not be viable because abstract declarations of will have always been less effective than the actual use of force. This is particularly true when strategic signaling is not taken seriously. Did Syria believe that the US was prepared to use the awesome power concentrated in the Naval Task Force off the Coast of Lebanon? Perhaps not initially but US withdrawal certainly answered the

question for many governments. Unfortunately, the lack of US credibility has created a dilemma for crisis managers that pushes them toward crisis resolution by force. When the NCA turns to look for options, the JCS must be ready with options that will work.

The above is outlined not to oversimplify what has repeatedly transpired but to stress that the JCS has found itself outside of this process because of the inability to provide timely, realistic options.

The need to anticipate potential crisis situations has been stressed. Of equal importance is an ability to bring together acceptable options with the supportive facts on how the options will be accomplished. The NCA has focused a great deal of attention on the details of planned military actions and expected results because of the necessity to have the military action mesh with the political objective. This produces a situation whereby the JCS must not only provide feasible, timely options but must provide specific related details (i.e., numbers of troops required, scheme of maneuver, support requirements, risk). The necessity to respond quickly to a fast developing crisis, coupled with the sensitivity associated with option formulation has driven the JCS away from detailed CINC involvement during the early critical stages of crisis management. The JCS is forced, instead, to turn to more immediately available sources and then gradually to introduce CINC involvement. This process was evident during crises occurring over a number of different Administrations. Ad hoc groups have traditionally been formed from JCS/Service assets to assist the chairman, JCS, in the critical, early stages of the crisis. This explains why, as recently as the Grenada Crisis, key staff officers at the 82nd ABN Division received phone calls directly from the JCS seeking information as to units, response times, etc. Similar situations have occurred

during each crisis. The intent is to obtain accurate, timely data that does not seem to be available to those supporting the Chairman, JCS. The CAS process is suppose to provide all types of information but has just not been responsive to the immediate needs of the NCA.

What is required is a modification of the CAS to reflect the process that historically has been imposed on the JCS during the option formulation stages. A procedure is needed to make readily available not only information on units but even basic contingency plans that can be quickly modified to conform to the crisis at hand. The result could well see the NCA opting for a JCS proposal instead of reacting to someone elses.

Intelligence Shortfalls

The availability of accurate intelligence during crisis management has frequently been questioned. This issue seems to vary from crisis to crisis. For example, intelligence information during the Cuban Missile Crisis was rather specific and accurate but such was not the case during the Grenada crisis. The importance of accurate intelligence cannot be stressed enough in option formulation. For the most part, adequate intelligence is available at the JCS. Although certain regions make it extremely difficult to obtain timely, up to the moment data. The Mayaguez incident is a case in point in which the exact location of the captured crew members and the size of the opposing force was still in doubt when the order to execute was issued. The more remote the crisis site the less information that will be available. This is one reason why whatever intelligence information is available must be promptly accessed. During the critical early stages of a crisis when option formulation is ongoing, problems exist in identifying and acquiring

pertinent intelligence to support the process. These problems seem to focus around the specific definition of requirements and the identification of the best sources to provide input. As anyone that has dealt with intelligence data knows, the information provided can be a few lines or volumes depending on the desires of the requestor. A military solution to a crisis requires a great deal of rather specific information. During crisis management, the JCS has traditionally employed an ad hoc procedure that is highly dependent on individual expertise. The group of people brought together to respond to a crisis in the Southwest Pacific region will differ from those brought together for a crisis in South America.

Since intelligence requirements vary from crisis to crisis there does not seem to be a structured process to identify information needs quickly. Initially, the JCS planner relies upon personal experience, knowledge of intelligence source material and any points of contact which can be called upon for assistance. Well defined and inclusive intelligence requirements become a function of the personal experience of the planner. Infrequency of crisis operations oftentimes precludes maintaining personnel continuity. Consequently, there is a "reinvention of the wheel" during crisis planning operations.

The JCS seems to be making considerable progress in dealing with intelligence shortfalls in a number of classified inter-agency initiatives that are intended to make rapidly available essential elements of intelligence that will facilitate crisis management. Unfortunately, the only real proof of their effectiveness will be an analysis of a crisis yet to happen. The key continues to be prior preparation through anticipation and knowledge of how the intelligence system is exercised.

Command and Control

Command and control in crisis management has been an extremely unsatisfactory area that the JCS has, as yet, been unable to resolve. Many of the associated problems center around the structure of the unified commands. Perhaps this is a good point to digress from the subject of crisis planning in order to address the broader question of the unified command of combat forces.

Unified Command of Combat Forces

President Eisenhower was instrumental in the establishment of the Unified and Specified Commands that control the employment of our armed forces. His intent was to organize combat commands because future conflicts would involve fighting with all services together in one concentrated effort. These combat commands would have full operational command of forces assigned while each service was to provide for the administration of those forces.

What has evolved over the years is a process whereby the services have been able to exert their influence into these combat commands. A number of major studies into the problem¹⁸ have revealed that the intended reforms have not taken effect and that the control by the military departments remains substantially unchanged. The CINCs have limited power to control the forces under their command and seem hostage to a parent service that controls the flow of men, money and material into the region. As a result, the overall effectiveness both in peace and in war has suffered.

The JCS has long since identified this problem but has had difficulty resolving it because of the wide-range of views shared by each of the services. Solutions require something more than "band-aid" fixes,

but rather call for radical transformations of command arrangements and functions. This factor has, to this date anyway, prevented the JCS from being able to make the modifications necessary to improve the system. However, for the past several years, and certainly since the open criticisms of Generals Jones and Meyer and the emergence of an influential Chairman, General Vessey, the JCS has been attacking the problem. Currently, the JCS is considering an Air Force initiated proposal revising the JCS Publication governing the activities and performance of the Armed Forces when two or more services are brought together.

This proposal¹⁹ begins with a historical perspective of the command arrangements used during WW II and continues through the present. Using case histories such as Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon (1958), the briefing depicts the failings of the system and includes a review of the current, varied structure from command to command. The conclusion reached is that the current structure is unsatisfactory and calls for revisions. Major criticism revolves around the fact that we are planning to employ our service forces as separate entities and strictly through service channels regardless of the need for combined operations. Major recommendations are shown in Figure 1.

- IT IS THE ASSERTION OF THE AIR FORCE AND THE ARMY THAT FUNCTIONAL EMPLOYMENT OF FORCES PROVIDES THE BEST STRUCTURE FOR ACHIEVING AN INTEGRATED WARFIGHTING CAPABILITY.
- WE NEED TO REMOVE THE AMBIGUITY IN THE TERMS COMPONENT COMMAND, SERVICE COMPONENT, AND COMPONENT, WITH THE EXPRESSED PURPOSE OF DISTINCTLY SEPARATING THE RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN A COMPONENT AND A SERVICE. WE SHOULD PLAN AND EXERCISE THE WAY WE INTEND TO FIGHT, AND OUR PLANS AND GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS SHOULD REFLECT THAT EMPHASIS ON WARFIGHTING.

- CONSEQUENTLY, THE AIR FORCE AND THE ARMY PROPOSE THAT COMMANDERS SHOULD PLAN TO EMPLOY THEIR FORCES FUNCTIONALLY, THAT THIS IS THE FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPT OF UNIFIED ACTION, AND THAT JCS PUB. 2 MUST BE REVISED PRIMARILY IN THE CONTEXT OF THAT BROAD OBJECTIVE.
- WE ASSERT THAT THESE NECESSARY CLARIFICATIONS ON THE PLANNED EMPLOYMENT OF OUR FORCES MUST BE MADE NOW. FOR TODAY, WAR IS TOO DEVASTATING, THE COST OF WAR-MAKING TOO EXPENSIVE, AND THE LIKELY WARNING TIME TOO SHORT FOR US TO AWAIT ANOTHER LESSON. WE MUST NOT DELAY UNTIL AFTER THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT WAR TO CREATE THE EFFECTIVE COMMAND STRUCTURE TO FIGHT IT.

Figure 1

The importance of a functional, unencumbered Unified Command cannot be stressed enough. Regardless of the policy to be pursued, or the strategy adopted, or the comprehensiveness of the strategic plans, this position of the equation must not falter. One is reminded of the analogy used when training junior leaders. . . . "A poor plan (read policy) vigorously executed is better than a great plan poorly executed." The analogy applies at whatever level of operation.

Whether or not the JCS acts in a comprehensive fashion or in just a concessionary fashion to appease proponents of this far-ranging proposal is yet to be determined. For now, the issue is being held in obedience by General Vessey, seemingly awaiting for the appropriate time to pursue what may be a hallmark decision of historical proportions.

With these issues in mind one can better address command and control during crisis situations using as a vehicle the Grenada crisis of October 1983.

Command and Control-Continued

There is no question that operation "Urgent Fury" was a resounding success. The NCA decision to resort to a military option resulted in

achieving the desired political objective. The after-action reports are being completed as a result of a comprehensive analysis of what took place. Although access to such reports was restricted, what can be determined is--as has been the case in almost every past crisis--the command and control of the combat forces was less than satisfactory.

First, the preparation of the plan was plagued by the same problems of crisis management that have previously been discussed.

Second, when a plan was finally approved it was to be executed through a command structure that was not only cumbersome, at best, but put together in an ad hoc fashion, (as always seems to be the case in crisis management--ad hoc). This is not to fault the command at any level and certainly not those attempting to execute the approved plan. The Joint Task Force (JTF) that was given responsibility was ill suited for the task. It was a naval task force operating in a uni-service environment but required to employ a multi-service force without prior coordination, under combat conditions. Inadequate and inappropriate personnel, lack of communications, no standard procedures, and lack of inter-operability are just some of the difficulties that the JTF commander encountered. Efforts to improve the situation as it developed were beneficial but only due to the personalities of the senior commanders. For example, the designation of a US Army Major General to join the JTF as the battle developed helped deal with the inter-operability problems. Yet, the general had to be pulled from his own command to function, as it were, as the Deputy JTF Commander and eventually as the Army ground force commander (not, however, as the commander, Ground Forces, because the Marines were retained under service control). The general found himself, as did many others, trying to operate in an ad hoc fashion, with an ad hoc staff, indeed, in an ad hoc environment.

The success of the operation is a tribute to the abilities of the soldiers and leaders--of all the people from all services. It is not a tribute to the system that has been allowed to develop by the JCS.

An analysis of past crises reveals similar problems. After action reports cite specific recommendations on steps that must be taken to better deal with the command and control problems. Most recommendations center around the establishment of a standing (equipped and manned) JTF Headquarters, either at each of the Unified Commands or one centrally located. The JCS has attempted, with little success, to bring this about. The merits of a standing JTF Headquarters are obvious--elimination of ad hoc arrangements--standard communications, procedures, policies, personnel, etc.

In fact, during the mid 1970s, the NSC was attempting to grapple with the growing problem of overcommitment of the defense establishment and the possibility of having to deal with crises in remote areas. In August 1977, a Presidential Directive on US National Strategy (PD/NSC-18) was issued. This document directed that the US would maintain a deployment force of light divisions with strategic mobility independent of overseas bases and logistical support, which includes moderate naval and tactical air forces and limited land combat forces. The intent was a standing JTF capable of responding to worldwide contingencies. (A Rapid Deployment Force-RDF.) The existing command arrangements made the establishment of such a force extremely difficult. Indeed, PD-18 is another example of the JCS having to react to strategies developed outside the JCS arena. Reaction to PD-18 was extremely slow; in fact, by late 1979 little, if any, effort had been exerted toward compliance with the Presidential Directive. The major issues were the Unified

Command Plan (how the CINCs geographical areas are allocated) and the insistence on unilateral employment. The arguments stated that the US Marines or the XVIII Airborne Corps satisfied the requirements of PD-18. What was being looked at was the rapid deployment capability of either forces, not their composition as part of a joint organization. Eventually, General Jones directed that the JCS initiate whatever was required to comply with PD-18. What emerged was the establishment of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) on 1 May 1980 at McDill, AFB, Florida. Its mission was to plan and to be prepared to respond to contingencies worldwide with emphasis on the Middle East-Persian Gulf region. This was to be standing Joint Task Force that, once operational, would alleviate the command and control problems that had plagued crisis management. The intent was to establish a 254 person Headquarters that would develop a series of contingency plans, conduct exercises, establish operational procedures, indeed, enhance the US capability to respond to a crisis anywhere in the world. The JCS did not assign specific forces to the RDJTF but made available forces for planning. These designated forces were to be available as a menu to choose from depending on the requirements generated by the crisis. (A Marine Battalion Landing Team or a Multi-Division Army force.)

The establishment of the RDJTF was received with a modest amount of fanfare by the public, thanks to considerable media attention. Certainly, its birth seems to have been instrumental in communicating to friends and adversaries that the US was prepared to respond. Although the RDJTF seemed to have satisfied the PD-18 requirement, it opened problems in other areas.

The RDJTF was established within the JCS with, little, if any, CINC involvement. The Headquarters was assigned a planning responsibility

for regions that had been geographically assigned to specific Unified Commands and in some cases that transcended the area from one CINC to another. This created considerable difficulties for all concerned. CINCEUR, for example, claimed planning responsibility for certain regions, as did CINCPAC. The directive establishing the RDJTF changed the planning responsibilities of the CINCs but allowed them to retain their command responsibilities. That meant that the RDJTF would plan for contingencies within a CINCs area. Once deployed into a specific Unified Command area the RDJTF would come under the operational command of the CINC. This seems cumbersome but investigation reveals that finally, ad hoc execution in crisis situations was to be brought under control. The RDJTF's only mission was preparing for a crisis.

The invasion of Afghanistan and the growing threat to the Persian Gulf led to the announcement of the Carter Doctrine declaring the region as vital to the security of the US. The RDJTF was compelled therefore to dedicate focus exclusively in the Middle East with little, if any, interest in other crisis prone areas. Eventually the command arrangements initially established had to be corrected. The Unified Command Plan was modified, boundaries were adjusted and the RDJTF became the Central Command dedicating itself completely to the Middle East. At that point, the JCS no longer had a JTF Headquarters capable of responding to worldwide contingencies. Immediate return to ad hoc execution.

At the present time, there is no standing JTF Headquarters capable of dealing with a crisis. In fact, should a crisis occur today in the Philippines, in Africa, in Latin America or in the Caribbean (all very possible eventualities) that required resorting to a military option, the responses would vary considerably, as would the probability of success. Each of those areas are the responsibility of a different CINC.

Not one of those CINCs has available to him a headquarters capable of employing a multi-service force put together to deal with a narrowly defined crisis. Each will have to resort to hastily putting together a Commander and staff, providing assets not readily available and then charging that commander with coordinating disparate forces to accomplish a plan that may have been specifically formulated at the very highest levels of the military (or civilian) chain of command!! There has to be a better way. We are courting disaster--this is particularly true when one considers the following realities that have been underscored by the senior leadership of the Army and the JCS in a variety of forums.

The range of threat facing the US today escalates from terrorist acts, regional crisis, conventional war and eventually nuclear warfare. The risk is lower at one end but the probability is higher. Yet our Command and Control arrangements have not been adjusted to reflect these realities.

The JCS must take immediate steps to either establish a standing JTF Headquarters (JTF 7 at McDill, AFB could be used as a basis), or it must direct that each CINC establish a dedicated JTF manned, equipped and prepared to respond within their region. Failure to do so will see a reoccurrence of the command arrangements seen in Iran, Grenada and Lebanon (1983). More, a failure to do so could lead to further disasters with US policy.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND FORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Eisenhower reforms of 1958 envisioned development by the JCS of forces required to implement the prevailing strategy along with recommendations as to how scarce resources were to be allocated. Such has

just not been the case. Service priorities continue to prevail over strategic needs.²⁰ The PPBS has been discussed in chapters I-III along with the emphasis placed on it by each of the services.

The majority criticism states that: JCS approves force goals and weapons programs proposed by each service; service interests rather than strategic needs play the dominant role in shaping program decisions; it is difficult to get services to support strategic needs that do not enhance their own capability. There is merit to each of these arguments when one considers the authority that has been relegated to services during budget preparation. A frequently cited case is that of the Secretary of the Navy waging a campaign for a 600 ship Navy. Achievement of this objective certainly serves the need of the Navy but may or may not serve the strategic needs of the country. Other examples abound. The Army Chief of Staff has established an overall Army end strength limitation for a specified number of years in order to obtain monies for use in other areas. Other services are calling for increases in end strength. This is not an issue of which service is correct but one of which option best serves the strategic needs of the country and who (or what agency) should best decide that answer.

The JCS allocates forces to Unified Commands based on the mission assigned. The services are responsible for the training and readiness of those forces. Strength limitations and service priorities could well see an Army Division within a Unified Command manned at a level that produces a considerable risk once forces are committed. The service view prevails. If the JCS cannot decide, or at least considerably influence, these decisions then it clearly is not exerting itself in the resource allocation and force development area.

The problem is far more pervasive than it seems. Proposed corrective solutions, although bountiful, still may not be capable of solving the problems. Measures such as including Unified Commanders in the budget deliberation process and creating a Programs Analysis and Evaluation Directorate are band-aid approaches that may alleviate but will stop short of dealing with an extremely complex and multifaceted problem. The PPBS system is linked to other governmental agencies, to the process that governs the president's budget and to the congressional system for budget approval. Required reforms transcend all areas. The fact of the matter is that the service emergence as the dominant force in the budgetary process is a result of factors that have evolved over years, factors such as: Increase in both Senate and Congressional Committees along with duplications of effort and responsibilities; inability to reach agreement--Defense Department has operated under a continuing resolution for the past six years; in FY 84 over 700 line items of the Defense budget were changed by the appropriations bill and over 1,000 line items were changed by the authorization bill. Each change, particularly since most affect out-year proposals and procurement, has a varied impact on the requestor. It is no wonder that strategic considerations--what the Defense Department should be doing--are relegated to second place and the services find themselves reacting in knee jerk fashion to the political prerogative of so many people and agencies.

The JCS has been much maligned for not exerting itself and, thus, abrogating its responsibilities. To be sure, reforms are necessary and transcend into planning and command/control responsibilities. In many areas, the JCS can take the lead. However, it must be stressed that the complexity of issues associated with resource allocation is of such

magnitude that regardless of what reforms JCS initiated they would be of little value if initiated in a vacuum.

What is called for are inter and intra-governmental reforms linked to one another. Interviews conducted by the team reveal the growing need for reforms which all seem to be centered internally. Such would seem a waste of effort. The difficulty rests with how such reform linkage would ever materialize. One conjures up committees; bipartisan commissions; casual or strict interface during reform efforts; etc. The concern is that the consensus for a linkage of reform may not be possible and that, driven by public pressure, growing waste and cost escalation, there will be a unilateral, seemingly fruitless outcome.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made by the Study Group, which if implemented, would enable the US defense planning process to insure to a greater extent that the overall product (US national security) is in fact greater than merely the sum of its parts.

- * Continue to study this problem in greater detail.
- * Counter news media misinformation immediately with factual military accounts of events.
- * Return to the roles and responsibilities envisioned for the NSC system and the State and Defense Departments vis-a-vis the US defense planning process.
- * The NCA should provide a greater degree of specificity in selected strategy and policy implementation.
- * DOD should concentrate more direct senior level officials' time to the specific workings of the contingency planning system.
- * The services and the JCS must be given administrative and political relief from the all-consuming demands of the budget battle, within as well as, outside DOD structure.
- * The Secretaries of State and Defense must insure that their departments are closely in tune and that foreign policy implementation and defense measures are in close conformity.
- * The President should insure that all departments and agencies which constitute the US defense planning process are in fact involved in accomplishing their part of the process. Shortcutting the process

to fit personal style can no longer serve as the type of leadership befitting a superpower with the responsibilities of the US.

* Military service parochialism must be kept to nonstrategic matters. The Secretary of Defense must insure that all services are fielding systems and developing force structures advancing overall defense objectives and which are designed to provide little or no duplication (unless desired), and, further, that all services are working off the same understanding of what is required to implement US defense strategy.

JCS

- Establish an inherit capability to generate dynamic, strategic thinking. Equip appropriately educated personnel with a simplified system to present ideas.

- Develop proposals that will satisfy the need for greater interplay between the military and civilian leadership in the planning process without losing JCS prerogative.

- Continue and, if possible, institutionalize the quarterly meetings between the President and the JCS.

- Revise the current process used to anticipate possible crisis situations with the intent of improving the overall responsiveness.

- Revise the current process used to develop a contingency plan once a potential crisis situation is identified in order to tie intelligence--to plan formulation--to forces available.

- Revise the Crisis Action System (CAS) to reflect the process that historically has been used during the option formulation stages.

- Establish a structured process to identify intelligence information needs quickly during crisis situations.

- Modify JCS Pub. 1 to incorporate the USAF and US Army proposals to reorganize the Unified Command functionally.
- Establish a JTF Headquarters manual, equipped and prepared to respond to a variety of contingencies. This standing JTF Headquarters should either be one Headquarters located centrally and responding globally, or one located within each Unified Command.
- Continue to support those reforms that enhance the resource allocation process. (Enhanced CINC involvement, PPBS modification, etc.)
- Propose inter and intra-governmental reforms linked to one another in dealing with the complexity of the resource allocation process.
- Recognize that the JCS is adequately fulfilling its strategic purpose.

ENDNOTES

1. US Army War College, Directive, Military Studies Program, pp. 31-32, 1984.
2. Dr. Jeffrey Record, "Why Our High-Priced Military Can't Win Battles." Washington Post (Washington, DC), 29 January 1984, p. D1.
3. Representative James Courter, R-N.J., released a study by a Mr. Bill Lind, senior military staffer for Senator Gary Hart, and President of the newly formed Military Reform Institute. Most of Mr. Lind's study findings were concluded through interviews, news releases and to use his words, "beer talk" with military personnel.
4. Interviews with four (4) OSD civilian officials, DOD, Washington, DC, 22 March 1984.
5. Interviews with three (3) OSD civilian officials, DOD, Washington, DC, 21 March 1984.
6. AFSC, National Defense University, Joint Staff Officers Guide-January 1984 (ASFSC PUB. 1), pp. 2-1 thru 7-11.
7. A "Purple Suited" approach refers to a military system similar to that used by Canada where there is only one service, one uniform, one military commander.
8. AFSC, PUB. 1, pp. 3-4 thru 3-7.
9. John M. Collins, US Defense Planning--A Critique, pp. 207-276.
10. Ibid., p. 25.
11. Ibid., pp. 211-247.
12. USAWC Student Handout to accompany instruction on National Security Seminar discussions comparing past and current Presidential use of the NSC system, 1983.
13. Collins, p. 26.
14. Interview with Senior OSD Administrator, DOD, Washington, DC, 21 April 1984.
15. Department of Defense Directive 5100.1, 26 January 1980. This directive outlines 19 specifically identified functions for the JCS. These three apply to strategic planning responsibilities.

16. Many examples to illustrate this point: McNamara; his Office of Program Analysis and Evaluation, Office of International Security Affairs; (later) Under Secretary for Policy. Strategy of Atomic Deterrence, Massive Retaliation, Flexible Response and Mutual Assured Destruction have their origins in other than JCS environment.

17. General E. C. Meyer, "The JCS--How Much Reform is Needed?" Armed Forces Journal International 119 (April 1982).

18. Blue Ribbon Defense Panel, Report to the President and the Secretary of Defense on the Department of Defense 1 July 1970 (Washington, DC, Government Printing Office, 1970); See also, Richard C. Steadman, Report to the Secretary of Defense on the National Military Command Structure (Washington, DC, July 1978); and also, John H. Cushman, Command and Control of Theater Forces: Adequacy (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1983).

19. Proposed Revision of JCS Pub. 2, Unclassified Briefing. Narrative and Slides made available to the USAWC by the Staff, USAF.

20. Samuel P. Huntington, "Defense Organization and Military Strategy," in the Public Interest, Number 75, Spring 1984. Prof. Huntington, drawing on many of the same references cited in this report (Cushman, Blue Ribbon Panels, Steadman, etc.), makes an excellent summary of this issue.

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* As per the USAWC Directive, Military Studies Program, no references are made to the classified material researched in this study.

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